

Hearing Terminologies

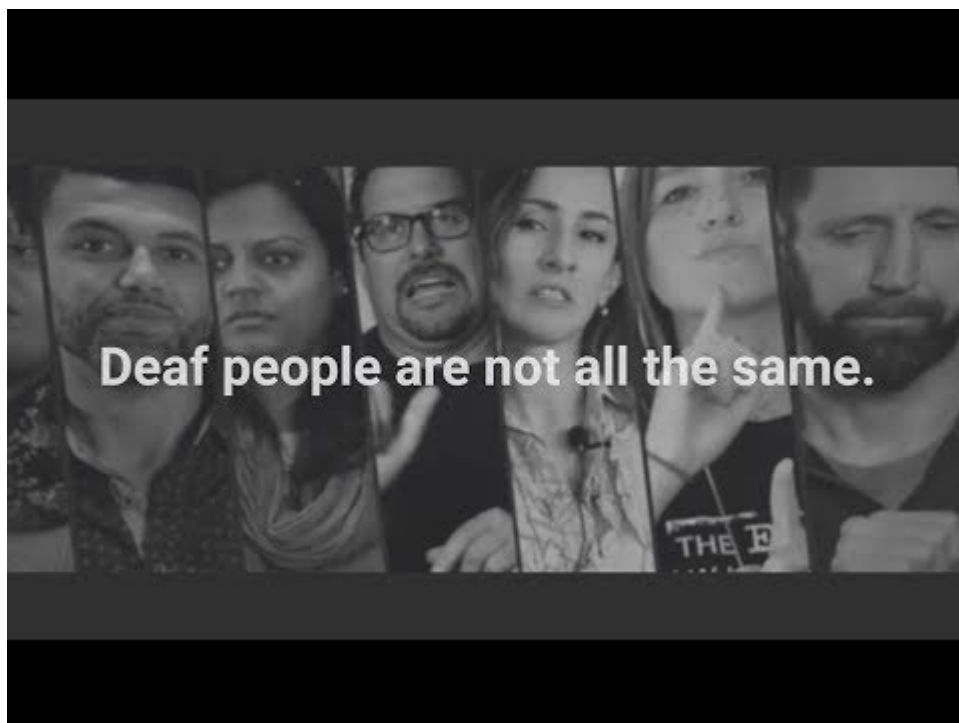
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Terminology



¹ National Deaf Center's YouTube channel, September 17, 2018

This guide will provide an overview of how a person may or may not identify themselves. It's recommended to ask the person how they wish to identify themselves instead of making assumptions otherwise. When you encounter a person who has a hearing loss, your first question should not be "Do you lipread?". A question such as this: "How can we or I accommodate you?" is considered more appropriate.

Appropriate Terms:

Deaf:

- This terminology applies to members of the Deaf community who feel they are a part of a "cultural and linguistic minority"ⁱ.
- They are proud to be Deaf and feel that Deafness is a vital part of their identity, valued as much as ethnicity, gender, and religious backgrounds.
- People in this cultural groups most likely attended residential schools for the Deaf, use American Sign Language (ASL), and view Deafness as the norm rather than as a disabilityⁱⁱ.
- Deaf people can relate each other through similar experiences of cultural and linguistic nuances as well as experiences of oppressionⁱⁱⁱ.
- ASL might be recognized as their primary/native language, they may or may not use speech to communicate.

deaf:

- This terminology addresses those who do not identify themselves as being part of the cultural Deaf community^{iv}.
- People who are "deaf" are usually those who rely on speech and residual hearing to communicate instead of sign language.
- This definition varies by individual and is usually connected to people with a severe to profound hearing loss who choose to associate mainly with hearing people.^v

Hard of Hearing:

- This is usually a term for people with a mild, moderate, or severe hearing loss.
- Speech is often used as their primary mode of communication but may also be involved in the Deaf community.
- This group is capable of transition between the Deaf and hearing cultures.
- Advocacy groups are usually focused on hearing loss to support each other and educate others on misconceptions about hearing loss.

Late deafened:

- This terminology refers to a person who grew up hearing, then lost all or most of her or his hearing as an adult.
- Some might learn sign language; others continue to communicate using spoken language they used prior to losing their hearing.
- Losing hearing late in life can come across as a culture shock, therefore, many with late onset hearing loss find it helpful to work with a mental health professional who understands hearing loss. These people are often most likely to pursue cochlear implantation.

Deaf Disabled:

- This is a reference to a person who identifies as being a part of a linguistic and cultural minority and have additional disabilities such as cerebral palsy, intellectual disabilities, cognitive disabilities, or other physical disabilities.

Deaf Plus:

- This is a reference to a child's hearing status combined with additional conditions².

deafblind/DeafBlind/deafblindness:

- A person with dual sensory loss (vision and hearing). If you wish to be culturally appropriate and respectful, this is one example of how to address it.
- All are acceptable terminologies.
- In 1991, some began to advocate changing the acceptable terminology from deaf-blind to deafblind as a more general term that allows for the possibility that an individual may have additional disabilities³.

Visually Impaired

- This term is used to determine the amount of vision loss. The least amount is visual impairment, then legal blindness, then light perception, and then total blindness. It is used for adults and school aged students when determining eligibility.

Low Vision

- It is considered a broader term to describe many levels of vision loss. It is typically used for people who are considered legally blind.

² [DeafPlus.pdf \(handsandvoices.org\)](#)

³ [History](#)

Inappropriate Terms:

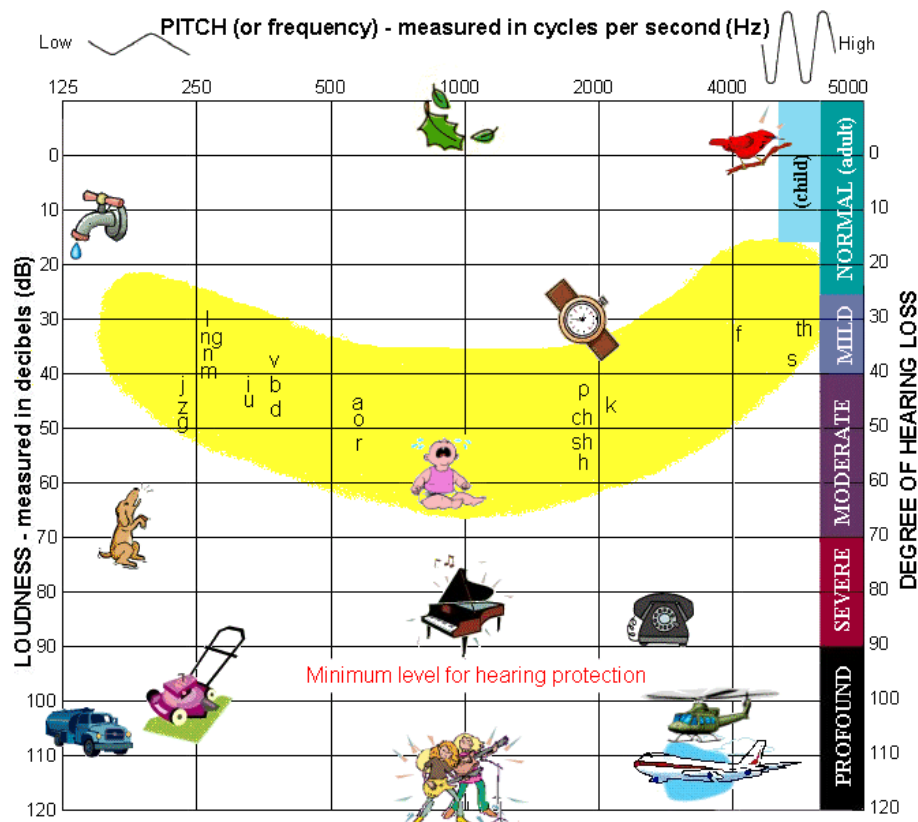
Hearing Impaired:

- The term "hearing impaired" is often used to describe people with a hearing loss ranging from mild to profound, including those who are Deaf and those who are Hard of Hearing.
- It is no longer being accepted by many in the community because it can be perceived as negative or derogatory. It can imply the person to be hindered or damaged.

Deaf-Mute or Deaf and Dumb:

- This term was widely used during the 18th and 19th centuries.
- Originated by the Greek philosopher, Aristotle because he felt deaf people were incapable of being taught, of learning, and of reasoned thinking.^{vi}
- This is considered offensive. It can be interpreted as both deaf and unable to speak^{vii}.

Category:



This audiogram above demonstrates an overview of these following features:

- 1) How loudness is measured in decibels
- 2) Different degrees of hearing loss
- 3) Images to demonstrate what kind of sounds can be heard at that pitch (i.e.: frequency)

Degree of Hearing Loss	Hearing loss range (dB HL)
Normal	-10 to 15
Slight	16 to 25
Mild	26 to 40
Moderate	41 to 55
Moderately severe	56 to 70
Severe	71 to 90
Profound	91+

Source: Clark, J. G. (1981). Uses and abuses of hearing loss classification. Asha, 23, 493-500.⁴

Slight Hearing Loss:

- When noises such as whispering or leaves rustling cannot be heard.

Mild Hearing Loss:

- When one struggles to understand words with background noises.

Moderate Hearing Loss:

- When one tends to ask people to repeat themselves.

Severe Hearing Loss:

- When one is unable to hear without the aid of hearing aids or other assistive technology.

Profound Hearing Loss:

- When one is only able to hear extremely loud noises such as rock and roll music at a concert.

⁴ [Degree of Hearing Loss \(asha.org\)](http://asha.org)

- Require either hearing aid or cochlear implant to comprehend sounds.

ⁱ POV: A New Age for Equal Access and the Deaf Community, by Emily Glenn & Andrew Bottoms, February 10, 2021. BU Today.

ⁱⁱ Padden and Humphries (1988), *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture*, Harvard University Press, MA

ⁱⁱⁱ *A Minyan of Women: Family Dynamics, Jewish Identity and Psychotherapy Practice*. (2013). (n.p.): Taylor & Francis. P. 95

^{iv} *Early Intervention for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. (2016). United Kingdom: Oxford University Press. P. 141

^v Padden and Humphries (1988), *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture*, Harvard University Press, MA

^{vi} Ciurria, M. (2019). *An Intersectional Feminist Theory of Moral Responsibility*. United States: Taylor & Francis.

^{vii} Kanigel, R. (2018). *The Diversity Style Guide*. United States: Wiley.